



Town of Arlington, Massachusetts
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Selectmen's Minutes 01-26-2009

TOWN OF ARLINGTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Meeting Minutes
 Monday, January 26, 2009

7:15 p.m.

Present: Ms. Rowe, Chair, Mr. Hurd, Vice Chair, Mr. Greeley, Mrs. Mahon and Ms. LaCourt
 Also present: Mr. Sullivan, Ms. Rice and Mrs. Krepelka

FOR APPROVAL

1. CONSENT AGENDA (one vote required for approval of all items)
 - a. Minutes of Meeting: January 12, 2009
 Mr. Greeley moved approval. SO VOTED (5-0)
 - b. Request: One Day Wine & Malt License, 3/21/09
 Lynne Jacoby, Lesley Ellis School Auction Committee
 Mr. Greeley moved approval subject to all conditions as set forth.
 SO VOTED (5-0)

APPOINTMENTS

2. Appointment: Board of Health
 Dr. Marie Walsh Condon
 (term to expire 01/26/12)
 Mr. Hurd moved approval. SO VOTED (5-0)

3. CITIZENS OPEN FORUM

Any matter presented for consideration of the Board shall neither be acted upon, nor a decision made the night of the presentation in accordance with the policy under which the Open Forum was established.

There were no matters presented for consideration of the Board.

TRAFFIC RULES & ORDERS/OTHER BUSINESS

4. Discussion: 2009 Patriots' Day Parade
 Brian Greeley, Chair, Patriots' Day Committee

Mr. Brian Greeley stated that the Patriots' Day Committee has only raised \$5,000 so far and suggested that maybe it is time to consider having a parade every other year. He stated that the Committee didn't want to put on a sub-standard parade and suggested instead of having a parade have a ceremony at Town Hall honoring local patriots. Mr. Greeley reported that the least expensive marching bands cost \$1500 and the Shriners want \$6500. The Committee just does not have the funds this year to hire the Shriners.

Selectmen Hurd suggested putting on an abbreviated parade with local talent in addition to the Town Hall ceremony honoring our local patriots. After much discussion, Mr. Greeley reported his committee will be meeting on Tuesday, February 3rd, at 7:00 p.m. at Bowes GMAC Real Estate and welcomed all to attend. After said meeting Mr. Greeley and his committee will report back to Selectmen with their final recommendations.

Ms. Rowe stated she would leave it to the judgment of the committee and the Board will support them in their decisions.

5. Recognition: State Champions, Arlington Catholic Football Team

Daniel Shine, Athletic Director

Serge Clivio, Coach

The Board congratulated the Arlington Catholic Cougars Football Team on their State Championship and the Thanksgiving Day victory with the Arlington High School Ponders.

The Board voted unanimously to allow Arlington Catholic to erect temporary, one-year signs, on the town borders proclaiming the state championship. The Selectmen approved a similar sign for the 2007 State Champion Cougar Girls Hockey Team. The Selectmen presented a proclamation to the three Captains, Coach Steve Clivio and members of the championship team.

6. Discussion:

1) Do you favor allowing the serving of drinks without food in licensed restaurants?

2) Do you favor allowing current Wine & Malt Only Package Stores to change to All Alcohol Package Stores?

3) Do you favor increasing the number of package stores from 3 stores to 5 stores?

Kevin Greeley, Selectman

Selectmen Greeley suggested asking voters whether they would like to allow the serving of drinks without food in our licensed restaurants. Mr. Greeley stated that he has been asked by many businesses and residents regarding this subject.

Mrs. Mahon stated she was not in favor of any of these questions and stated that she doesn't want it that every year we are talking about alcohol. She stated that she goes to many restaurants and not once has anyone approached her to ask if they could only have a drink without having to purchase food. Mrs. Mahon feels it sends a mixed-message, especially to minors and thinks the Board is not leading by example.

Ms. LaCourt stated that allowing drinks to be served without food could lead to dangers on the road because many in town are not within walking distance of a restaurant that serves alcohol.

Ms. Rowe was not opposed to the idea

Mr. Hurd stated he would not support serving alcohol without food in restaurants but would consider one additional beer and wine license if it was located in Arlington Heights. He would also consider adding all alcohol to the existing beer and wine licenses. Mr. Hurd wanted to make it clear that the vote tonight is only to place the non-binding questions on the April ballot for public opinion and not a mandate of support. He also stated that although the Board had spent many hours developing the current restaurant alcohol serving regulations, he felt the Board should revisit the definition of a meal.

Mr. Greeley stated that he was trying to bring Arlington into the 20th century.

He feels that it is totally unfair that the Heights area doesn't have a Wine and Beer Store.

Ms. Rowe stated she agreed with Mr. Greeley and feels it is a decision that we should bring to the people. She stated that we have three wonderful establishments now and maybe we should look into having more businesses in Town.

Mrs. Mahon asked how much revenue comes to the Town from these stores and feels it is unfair to the other businesses.

Mr. Greeley made a motion to put the following Non-Binding questions on the Ballot:

Question 1. Do you favor allowing the service of alcoholic beverages without food in licensed restaurants?

SO VOTED (3-2)

Mrs. Mahon and Ms. LaCourt voted in the negative.

Question 2. Do you favor increasing the number of stores in Arlington licensed to sell wine and malt beverages for consumption off-premises from three to five?

SO VOTED (4-1)

Mrs. Mahon voted in the negative.

Question 3. Do you favor allowing stores in Arlington currently licensed to sell wine and malt beverages for consumption off-premises to sell all alcoholic beverages for consumption off-premises? SO

VOTED (4-1)

Mrs. Mahon voted in the negative.

4) Health Insurance for future Selectmen

Selectman Rowe brought up the idea of looking to see if compensation for the Board of Selectmen and other elected officials could be legally adjusted and whether the town could legally allow current board members to keep their health insurance while eliminating the benefit for future selectmen. The Town Counsel stated the town could possibly cut out health insurance by rewriting selectmen's duties so that the \$3,000 they receive is listed as reimbursement expenses rather than salary and their hours are reduced to less than 20 hours per week. Ms. Rice also stated that these changes, based on a recent Bylaw change in Brookline, would still need approval from the Attorney General.

Mr. Greeley rejected the idea of cutting out health insurance even if it means he could retain his own benefits. He stated "he never took the job of Selectmen for the pay and felt insulted when it's implied he is not worth it". Mr. Greeley stated the \$3,000 yearly stipend for Selectmen hasn't changed in 20 years and eliminating health insurance would limit who could serve on the Board. If the Board decides to eliminate the benefits he would step down. Mr. Greeley stated that he contributes at least \$3000 to various causes around town. Mr. Greeley was also very upset about a guest column in the Arlington Advocate last week written by Redevelopment Board member, Christopher Loreti, saying that Arlington is getting a bad deal from its compensation paid to the Selectmen. Mr. Greeley asked what does Belmont and other Towns pay.

Ms. LaCourt said the town purposefully hires staff to positions of less than 20 hours a week to save money on benefits and the Selectmen might consider making the sacrifice because of budget deficits.

Ms. Rowe stated she would not go forward with an article at this time and we could look at it again next year.

Mr. Greeley stated that we should wait until we see what Brookline does.

Mr. Greeley moved that the Chair, Mr. Hurd and Town Counsel research possible prior Town Meeting vote on Selectmen's compensation and report back. SO

VOTED (5-0)

Mr. Hurd moved that he would like to see what other towns do and after we receive information we could have another discussion. SO VOTED (5-0)

5) Change of land ownership outside of schools

Clarissa Rowe, Chair

Ms. Rowe inquired if the Board would consider drafting a warrant article to transfer land abutting the schools to the Town. In order to transfer said land, a vote to be valid would have to be preceded by written notice from the Superintendent of Schools to the Board of Selectmen that the School Department no longer needs the land for its current purpose, and the Town Meeting vote would have to be two thirds. These requirements are from Chapter 40, Section 15A of the General Laws.

Ms. Rowe stated that the Bishop School land is not being taken care of along with other Schools and this may give us the opportunity to improve the conditions of all our schools.

Ms. Rowe stated she was also concerned about the pathway at Brackett School, which she feels is unsafe.

Ms. LaCourt inquired as to how much of the custodians' time is spent outside of the buildings. She suggested that the Town Manager sit down with the school department and determine who is responsible for figuring this out -- what does the School Department do and what does the Public Works Department do. Ms. LaCourt suggested that maybe it is an organizational problem and perhaps the Parks and Recreation Department should take over.

Mr. Hurd asked the Town Manager to sit down and work out arrangements as to who is in charge of taking care of this land.

Mr. Greeley stated that this is not a simple issue. He reminded the Board regarding all the issues that were involved with the Stop & Shop land.

Mrs. Mahon feels this issue should be discussed by the Chair and Town Manager. She is not in favor of putting it on the Town side because we have less staff -- custodians are doing basic work and the Town side is spread too thin.

Mr. Hurd stated the Ottoson custodial staff does an excellent job maintaining the fields and he feels the custodians take great pride in their work.

Mr. Sullivan stated he would sit down with John Bean, Director of Public Works, Joe Connolly, Director of Parks and Recreation, Kathy Bodie, Supt. Of Schools and Mark Miano to resolve this problem.

7. Approval: Revised Fire Department Fee Schedule

Brian Sullivan, Town Manager

Chief Jefferson stated that his department's fees are out of date and suggested new fees that would produce an estimated \$25,000 in additional town revenue. Town Manager Sullivan stated he has asked department heads to review fees every year, but some have been more diligent about increasing fees than others. Ms. Mahon asked the Town Manager to recommend to the Board as to how often we should raise fees. Mr. Hurd suggested that maybe we should look at fees every year.

Mr. Greeley moved approval of revised fee schedule.

SO VOTED (5-0)

Mrs. Mahon asked Chief Jefferson if there was a policy about the clearing of hydrants after a snowstorm. Chief Jefferson stated that his department clears 1400 hydrants around town within two to three days after a snowstorm. He stated that firefighters don't mind that duty but could use the public's help – firefighters don't want to be looking for hydrants at two o'clock in the morning.

Ms. LaCourt asked the Town Manager if an alert could be put on the Town's website asking the public to help out by shoveling the fire hydrants in front of their residences or businesses.

Ms. Rowe mentioned to the Fire Chief that she had received calls from residents regarding the blasting on Cutter Hill/Edgehill Roads. Chief Jefferson stated that a firefighter is there everyday that blasting is being done and the State Fire Marshall's Office investigates every complaint.

Correspondence Received

Thomas K. Steel, Jr. Univision Communications Inc. Negotiations Be Rec'd
RCN Vice-President

Ms. Rowe inquired if any of the Board members knew about the contractual dispute that may result in the loss of the Spanish Language channels owned by Univision Communications. Unless the companies reach an agreement, RCN will drop the channels on January 31st. No Board member is aware of any disputes.

Mrs. Mahon moved receipt of correspondence.

SO VOTED (5-0)

New Business:

Mr. Sullivan reported that the Massachusetts Municipal Association gave Arlington a first place award for the 2008 Annual Town Report in the category for towns with populations of 12,500 or more.

Mr. Sullivan reported that the Governor announced his 9C cuts in local aid for FY 2009 and his proposed local aid cuts for FY2010. The local aid reductions for the Town of Arlington are as follows:

FY2009

9.74% reduction in Lottery Aid and Additional Assistance: (\$919,668)

FY2010

28% cut in FY 2009 pre-9C Additional Assistance and Lottery Aid: (\$2,643,808.)

The above cut could be offset by an increase in the Meals tax of 1% and an increase of the Hotel tax of 1% bringing in an additional \$155 million statewide. This could reduce the above cut by \$1.1 million, if passed by the Legislature. The minimum local aid reduction for FY2010 would be \$1.6 million to a maximum of \$2,643,808.

Mrs. LaCourt feels there are many options to discuss in a friendly atmosphere, but it requires patience and great conversation.

Mr. Hurd stated this may not be where we will end up, but we should collectively work with the Unions to address this problem.

Mr. Hurd stated the Health Care Forum will be held on February 3rd at Town Hall and asked everyone to come and share their opinions, suggestions, stories regarding our national health care with other residents.

Mr. Hurd stated that the Mass. Corridor Meeting will held on February 4th at Town Hall to discuss final plans and everyone is welcomed to come.

Mr. Hurd stated that maybe it is time for the subcommittee on revenues to meet to look into new ways to obtain revenues. He

suggested looking at Thorndike Field as a revenue source.

Ms. LaCourt stated that she attended the Massachusetts Municipal Association meeting and attended a workshop on regionalization. She stated that Belmont and Lexington Selectmen would like to meet with members of our Board to discuss regionalization and energy savings.

Ms. Rowe reported that Representative Will Brownsberger would continue to work on regionalization with the health departments from Belmont, Lexington and Arlington.

Mrs. Mahon moved to adjourn at 10:00 p.m.

SO VOTED (5-0)

A true record: Attest:

Marie A. Krepelka
Board Administrator